



ARLANDRIA ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
Arlandria Action Plan Advisory Group Meeting #9
“STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION” OPEN HOUSE

Wednesday, June 20, 2012

6:00PM – 8:45PM

Four Mile Run Park Community Building, 4109 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Alexandria, VA

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting notes are recorded by City Staff to provide a written record of principal items of discussion, key comments, decisions of the Advisory Group, and comments from the public. They are not intended to be a verbatim transcription of the meeting.

Implementation Open House

From 6:00PM – 7:00PM the public and members of the Arlandria Action Plan Advisory Group (AG) had the opportunity to discuss implementation activities with staff. Stations were set up in the room with representatives from the Department of Planning and Zoning (PZ), Department of Transportation and Environmental Services (TES), Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities (RPCA), and Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP). Each station provided written materials and staff members to discuss projects, answer questions, and address concerns.

Welcome and Introductions

Faroll Hamer, Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, welcomed meeting attendees to the annual “Status of Implementation Open House”. Brandi Collins, PZ Urban Planner, provided an overview the meeting’s agenda and invited meeting attendees to introduce themselves.

Updates on Completed Implementation Activities

Arlandria AG Executive Committee

Kevin Beekman of the Arlandria AG Executive Committee (the Executive Committee is a five member group that provides leadership for the AG) provided a presentation on implementation activities that the AG could consider as priorities. The activities include improvements to Four Mile Run Park (restoration of interpretive signage, tree planting, completion of the Four Mile Run Park Expansion site, upgrades to the Four Mile Run Park Community Building), Capital Projects (bike lanes, street trees maintenance, left turn arrow on Mt. Vernon/S. Glebe/Arlington Ridge, off-peak parking along Mt. Vernon Ave), Public Art (murals, statues, sculpture, live performances at Four Mile Run Park Community Building), Business Development (façade improvements), and Transit Improvements (bus stop relocation, marketing, wayfinding, street banners, crosswalks).

Four Mile Run Park Expansion Project & Community Building

Laura Durham, RPCA Open Space Coordinator, informed meeting attendees that Phase 1 of the Four Mile Run Park Expansion Project has been completed. It was funded with \$200,000 in capital funds per an AG 2011 recommendation. The remaining work tasks (rain gardens, plantings, seating) are not currently funded. The tasks will have to be completed piecemeal as there is currently no funding available to complete the expansion project. However, irrigation is funded and will be installed, along with 21 trees, next month. She also stated that staff continues to explore opportunities to fund improvements to the Four Mile Run Park Community Building. The most imminent need for the building is a new HVAC system, demonstrated by the fact that the

evening's Advisory Group meeting had to be relocated from that building to Cora Kelly due to the local heat advisory.

Economic Development Activities

Rebeca Blanco and Sara Pierce of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership provided a summary of implementation activities over the last 14 months. Completed projects include two façade improvements, technical assistance to local businesses, relocation of small business within the neighborhood, and the formation of the Arlandria-Chirilagua Business Association (ACBA). Pending projects include five additional façade grants and finding a tenant for an empty retail space at the Foodway Shopping Center.

ACBA is an incorporated non-profit with a nine-member board and 30 active members. The Board Vice President, Sharon Eddy, was introduced to the meeting attendees. Membership meetings occur monthly on the fourth Tuesday. The next two meetings are focused on preparing local businesses for the new tourism traffic anticipated as a result of the new Del Ray-Arlandria Trolley. One accomplishment of the ACBA was the award of a \$15,000 Marketing Fund Matching Grant from the City. The grant was used to fund the ACBA webpage and a business directory mailer. The website has launched (www.alexandria-ACBA.org). The direct mailer will be mailed to 16,000 local households three times. The first mailer will be mailed in July.

Transportation and Pedestrian Enhancement Projects

Faye Dastgheib, TES Principal Planner, provided an update on completed transportation projects (Mt. Vernon Ave/W. Reed Ave intersection and pedestrian improvements), projects in progress (bus shelter installation at Mt. Vernon Ave/W. Reed Ave intersection, Trolley), and projects on target to be complete by the end of the calendar year (Safe Routes to School project at Commonwealth Ave/W. Reed Ave, bike lanes and sharrows along Mt. Vernon Ave, Bicyclists safety improvements at Commonwealth Ave/Mt. Vernon Ave).

Faye also discussed an Arlington County memorandum to the Arlandria Action Plan Advisory Group that stated that the installation of a left turn signal or left turn lane at the Mt. Vernon Ave/S. Glebe Ave/Arlington Ridge Rd intersection is currently infeasible. It is infeasible due to several constraints: 1) lack of sufficient right-of-way for a lane expansion and 2) a current "F" Level of Service (LOS) for the intersection. Adding a left turn lane is not possible without taking land from existing parkland. Adding another turning movement (dedicated left turn signal) will further exacerbate the existing failing LOS and therefore Arlington County does not consider those options to be feasible. Instead, Arlington has recently changed the signal timing to allow additional time for the northbound green signal in an effort to provide more time for the left turning movement. They hope that this remedy can provide some relief.

Public Comments and Questions

- Relocate the bus stop from the corner of Arlington Ridge Rd/S. Glebe Rd/Mt. Vernon Ave.
- Widen the Mt. Vernon bridge to create another travel lane.
- What is the replacement schedule for the Mt. Vernon bridge?
- Install "Share the Road" bicyclists signs.

Development Projects

Maya Contreras, PZ Urban Planner, provided an update on four development projects. The Mt. Vernon Village Center Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) was approved by City Council in December 2011. The East Reed Townhome Site Plan Application was approved by City Council in

April 2012. The Four Mile Run Pump Station Site Plan was approved by City Council in March 2012. The Calvert is currently under construction.

Public Comments and Questions

- What types of recycling will the recycling center at the Four Mile Run Pump Station collect? Will there be problem with rodents?

Advisory Group Exercise to Prioritize Implementation Activities

Steve Kaii-Ziegler, PZ Division Chief, facilitated a group exercise to allow residents an opportunity to provide input on future implementation activities. All participants were provided a copy of a matrix that identifies all of the recommendations included in the 2003 Arlandria Action Plan, project status, timeframes, and costs. The theme of the exercise was Neighborhood Revitalization. Participants were separated into four groups with a specific discussion topic: 1) Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Centers, 2) Infrastructure and Streetscape, 3) Infill and Redevelopment, and 4) Business Retention and Recruitment. The goal was to hold a discussion on existing assets and new implementation opportunities to continue the efforts to revitalize Arlandria. The discussion should yield input for future City Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) and community-led projects. Participants were asked to consider the Implementation Matrix when identifying future projects.

Summary of Group Exercise

Group: Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Centers

“What existing Arlandria assets/amenities/resources contribute positively to Arlandria’s Parks, Open Space and Recreation Centers?”

- Citizens
- Forest area
- Athletic fields
- Park Expansion and Community Building
- Flow and park access
- Water System
- Approved plan for [Four Mile Run] restoration
- Partnership with Arlington [County]
- Fitness equipment at Cora Kelly [Recreation Center]
- Class
- Group community resources

“What can we recommend for future implementation activities (projects, programs, community lead, CIP related) in Arlandria that could contribute positively to Arlandria’s Parks, Open Space and Recreation Centers?”

- Interpretive Signage
 - Short-term – less expensive
 - Long-term
- Implement 4 Mile Run Plan in wetland area [boardwalks similar to those in Dangerfield Island]
- Rain Garden to be completed
- Phase 2 of [Four Mile Run] Park Expansion

Group: Infrastructure and Streetscape

“What existing Arlandria assets/amenities/resources contribute positively to Arlandria’s Infrastructure and Streetscape?”

- Art Deco Signage
- Sidewalks
- Lighting
- Four Mile Run Park
- Four Mile Run
- Street Trees
- Roads
- Pedestrian crossing offsets

“What can we recommend for future implementation activities (projects, programs, community lead, CIP related) in Arlandria that could contribute positively to Arlandria’s Infrastructure and Streetscape?”

- Parts of Arlandria have dark spots
- Safe cycling courses
- Share Road signs
- Sharrows/Stripping
- Public Art (unified)
- Consider signage amendments respective to Arlandria
- Reinvestigate gateway/entrance
- Reconfigure access point at Duron [Four Mile Run Park Community Building]/24 Express with shared parking
- Mt. Vernon/E. and W. Glebe intersections
- More street trees better maintained
- Unified character of many of above

* Priorities of the group are

“Bike Safety” which includes:

- Safe cycling courses
- Share the Road signs
- Sharrows/Stripping

“Intersection improvements” which includes:

- Reconfigure access point at Duron [Four Mile Run Park Community Building]/24 Express with shared parking
- Mt. Vernon/E. and W. Glebe intersections

“Unified Character of many [recommendations] above”

Group: Infill and Redevelopment

“What existing Arlandria assets/amenities/resources contribute positively to Arlandria’s Infill and Redevelopment efforts?”

- Diversity of stores
- Small Business

- Variety of stores [ranging from] CVS – [to] small [businesses]
- Proximity of retail to residential (improved?) is a good thing and could be improved upon with better connections
- Warwick Pool and picnic area
- Grocery store
- Retain shops/neighborhood serving retail
- Small business/not chain stores/diversity
- Community Building

“What can we recommend for future implementation activities (projects, programs, community lead, CIP related) in Arlandria that could contribute positively to Arlandria’s Infill and Redevelopment efforts?”

- Bring retail to the street
- Connect retail and residential
- Connections to [Warwick] Pool → not through parking lots
- Linking amenities – walkable
- Trees/shade
- Better walkability through Glebe Rd/Mt Vernon intersection so that it’s comfortable to walk from Del Ray
- Bike lanes with development
- Traffic Calming → trees/on-street parking/etc/bike lanes
- More outdoor space for retail and restaurants → encourage restaurants to pursue outdoor seating

Group: Business Retention and Recruitment

“What existing Arlandria assets/amenities/resources contribute positively to Arlandria’s Business Retention and Recruitment efforts?”

- Revitalization and energy
- Community – authentic and diverse
- Birchmere/MOMs
- Location – convenient, proximity to Del Ray
- Transportation and Trolley
- ACBA [Arlandria-Chirilagua Business Association] and Façade Grants
- Farmer’s Market

“What can we recommend for future implementation activities (projects, programs, community lead, CIP related) in Arlandria that could contribute positively to Arlandria’s Business Retention and Recruitment efforts?”

- Outdoor seating and encourage walkability
- More colors, vibrancy, facades
 - Interesting, unique, cohesive
 - Banners, flowers
 - Tree trimming
- Better signage and wayfinding
- Safety – crosswalks, police presence

- Better collaboration between Birchmere/MOMs and other businesses
 - Engage and market to whole community
 - More events and utilize new facilities at Four Mile Run [Park]
 - Prepare for changes and new tourism

During discussion related to the exercise, an attendee raised the issue of the importance of schools in communities and that the Alexandria City Public Schools System should be invited to this process.

Next Steps

Brandi Collins informed meeting attendees that their input will be considered in staff's list of implementation activities to pursue within the next 12 months. The Status of Implementation Report will include the list of projects and will be presented to City Council in September 2012. The AG will have an opportunity to review the report and provide comments prior to the City Council hearing.